FOR PARTICIPANTS ONLY

UNESCO/SS/CONF.URB/W/14
ECAFE/URB/14
16 August 1956

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE FAR EAST
AND
UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

JOINT UN/UNESCO SEMINAR ON URBANIZATION IN THE ECAFE REGION

Jointly sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Bureau of Social Affairs and the Secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, in co-operation with the International Labour Office

8-18 August 1956
Bangkok, Thailand

RAPPORTEUR'S SUMMARY REPORT - ITEM 3(c)

Prepared by Mr. P.N. Prabhu

Human and social aspects of urbanization in Asia

Item 3(c) Effects of urbanization upon family life and the status of different family members

The proceedings were opened by the Rapporteur Dr. P. PRABHU with a brief introduction. He drew the attention of the members to the relative documentation, namely URB/7, and to two other documents, viz. "Processes and Problems of Industrialization in Under-developed Countries" published by the United Nations, and Professor Hauser's introductory paper all of which together contained some important points for discussion as follows:

1) The sheer magnitude of the populations undergoing rapid industrialization and urbanization multiplies and complicates the problems of the family.

2) There of course local differences in these problems even within the same country like India because of variations in the environmental context.

/3) It is

3) It is extremely difficult to obtain factual or statistical data on the subject apart from a very limited number of local studies based on impressions of observers.

4) In the two largest countries of Asia, namely China and India, the prevailing family is an extended or joint one encompassing a number of successive generations and with a strong, generally patriarchal, head. But in Indonesia and Thailand there was a smaller family unit.

5) Socially, the welfare of the aged and the handicapped, the care of the sick, the performance of certain religious rites, and educational functions have been a family responsibility.

6) The family is also a productive unit for the support of all its members; but with the loss of this fundamental economic function other roles of the family are also affected. Married couples established the smaller independent units and the husband and the wife may live far away from their respective parents' original homes. Parents, parents-in-law, unmarried and widowed brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts, etc. tend to be excluded more and more from the family household.

7) Added to this, is the housing problem in the towns which limits the number of the family members who can live together.

8) Education, entertainment and the many emotional satisfactions available in a large well-knit family have to be provided for by outside associations. And this is an extremely difficult task.

9) Urban life and industrial occupation may have its own attractive features. On the other hand, the repelling features of the village are poverty and the pressure of population on the land. Therefore migration to towns is largely a flight from rural poverty.

10) However, the urbanized villagers have in their hearts a great love for their village places and environment and therefore seek every opportunity and excuse to run back to their villages in between periods of occupation and earning in the city. This is particularly so when most of the migrants leave their wives and children in the villages. But this kind of constant flux of workers between towns and villages constitutes a tremendous handicap in industrial progress.

/11) However,

11) However, this flux helps to spread knowledge of urban life and modern ways to the rural population. (DR. PRABHU added that it also keeps the urban migrant closely in touch with the rural ways and ideas and to that extent he rarely becomes a completely urbanized individual).

12) Because of the fact that in urbanization the principal bread-winner of the family has to live away from his family, the very concept of the "family" has undergone changes. This situation is certainly disruptive of family life. The wife and children are deprived of those forms of emotional security that a husband and a father can provide. However, the wife is the most affected person, whereas the children are not so much affected. Usually they draw upon the sympathy and affection of the mother, the grand-parents and almost all other elderly members of the family. One of the most disruptive consequences of separation between the husband and the wife is the instability of the urban family owing to the number of deserted mothers and abandoned children.

13) Urbanization involves importation from abroad of new ideas, such as, the rights of women, individualism, "modernism" etc. which also tend to undermine the close unity and strength of the traditional family.

14) However, there are several situations where migration of the bread-winner from the village to the city has also added to the status therefore the strength of the family. It is usual to find the individual migrant being deeply attached to the family members and the home in the village, sending most of his earnings back to the village home to build up a house for the family, buy lands there, and so forth.

/15) When the

15) When the entire conjugal family, that is the husband, wife and children move to the town, all of them face the consequences of the impact of urbanization directly. These consequences will depend upon the physical, environmental and other conditions in their respective locations in the town.

16) It is generally accepted that urbanization has improved the status of women, reduced the despotism of the family head and brought the husband and wife closer than before. However, the urban wife has lost the specific status and the functions, such as they were in the rural tradition.

17) In the city there are a large number of new influences: the schools, the city-bred contemporaries, the media of mass information, the movies, the stage, the variety of recreational occupations including gang formations, etc. Some of these tend to produce friction in parent-child relationship. It must be remembered that though the father is technically now closer to the children, he works by the clock and is outside the home for the major part of the day, and the children are mostly left to themselves during the period. Sometimes the mother also works and this makes the situation worse.

18) Separation and divorce are more likely in an urban setting.

19) Psychologically, death has the most shocking effect, sometimes traumatic, on city children because it often means that their only support in the world is gone.

20) It must be said, however, that in the East the village is becoming increasingly urbanized and the towns have many rural features.

/21) Urbanized

21) Urbanized conditions give rise to severe social and particularly mental problems of maladjustment and to meet these problems, the city has given rise to certain institutions to provide for physical facilities and social services. However, the expansion of the town is unplanned and the rate of expansion is much faster than these facilities and services can be provided. There is therefore great need for planning of cities - planning the physical conditions of the towns, industries, their even spread in different towns, the suburbs and their development, housing arrangements, location of social services in different parts of the city, and so forth.

22) Planning is also required to take care of unemployment, sickness, old-age, widowhood and other disabilities.

23) The above includes a number of economic, social, as well as psychological factors. In addition, there are various psychological satisfactions and rewards connected with the family celebrations of religious ceremonies and rituals such as birth, marriages, festivies and funerals. Also the question of recreation, use of leisure time and communication is important.

To these points emerging from the documentation, Dr. Prabhu added the following points for consideration:

1) The question of child labour is assuming great significance. It has been suggested that after all exploiting child labour in the city is only a continuation of the exploitation of child labour in the village agricultural farm. But there was really a great difference in the two. In the latter case, the child worked on the farm of the family and its efforts were directly connected with its own living; and the fruit of the effort, the produce, was directly useable by the family. Also, the work did not go by the clock. There was some kind of convenience of each worker which could be taken into account for some kind of adjustment. There were no rigid rules of attendance at work, leave, wage-cut, and so forth. On the contrary, in the city the child's work was characterised by considerable impersonality. He was bound by the rigid rules of hours of work, leave and so forth. He was never concerned with the production itself. He only earned money which was expected to help him in buying the goods and services required by him.

2) The question of the loss of traditional forms of social control through the family has its own ramifications. Unless other forms of social control are properly devised as substitutes there will be problems of vagrancy, delinquency and a host of others.

3) In some cases a new pattern of family is emerging in some of the Asiatic countries. It may be called the "industrialist family". A family owns a large number of industrial concerns. These are distributed to different members of the family on semi-individual ownership basis. That is, the largest number of shares are owned in each of these industries by one or the other member of the family. This prevents the emergence of capable and sound industrial leadership, and in its turn results in lack of progress of industrialization.

/4) It is

4) It is usual to find among ruralites a certain spirit of contentedness. But the cities engender a keen spirit of competition. It is but natural that such a spirit of competition will lead to constant stresses and strains and anxiety in the city dwellers.

5) Some of the cherished aspects of ruralites' value system have been rudely shaken by urbanization. For example, generally in Asiatic countries the profession of teaching and learning have been placed at extremely high premium. The wealthiest man in India in a village would rise up in honour of a teacher to welcome him even though this teacher is invariably the poorest in the locality. Our views in this connection have gone topsy turvey owing to the influence of urbanization.

6) Similarly the question of respect to age. Since everything is measured in terms of capacity to earn, even the elderly people who are nearest of kin, like the parents, may lose the respect and attention of the younger generation. The elders who are incapable of earning may be looked upon as burden on the family's economic resources.

DR. BARLINGAY (INDIA) drew the attention of the members to the fact that the Hindu joint family contained not only three or four generations of blood relations but all other dependents like the servants, etc, in the family for all practicable purposes. This included also the lame, the aged, the diseased, the handicapped, etc. whether they were related by blood or not to the family. He also pointed out that the Indian Parliament is revising the Hindu Law in regard to the various disabilities which women had, so far as property and other individual rights were concerned.

PROFESSOR ISOMURA (JAPAN) pointed out that the family situation in urban and rural conditions represents quite a great difference in Japan. Apart from the question of size of the family there is the problem of finding suitable accommodation for the family in the city and therefore most of the members of the family are left behind in the village. In a trial study he made on the changing attitude of the younger generation, two years ago, it was found that nearly 90 per cent of new high school students felt that they should be independent after their marriage from their parents. In the case of college students this percentage was still higher, but in the rural area only 45 per cent of the students held this idea. One of the consequences of urbanization has been that people migrating from the same village tend to cluster together in the city because they find some amount of security and protection in living together in a strange city. This gives rise to slums in the Japanese cities. About two million poor people throughout Japan are receiving aid of Public

/Assistance.

Assistance. In some of the extremely northern parts of Japan like the cities of Tokyo and Osaka the percentage is still higher. These people live in tenement houses which are all of very old type and the environment is conducive of immorality and vices.

The member from PAKISTAN pointed out that the State must provide certain basic social services like security of subsistence, old age pension, care for the deprived children and so forth. People young and old are drawn to criminal behaviour very often, not because they like it, but because they have no other way or means of satisfying their immediate and urgent needs.

The member from VIET-NAM pointed out that the environment of urbanization of family varies according to the region in Viet-Nam. In the north there is the old joint family and therefore the problem of urbanization is somewhat greater than in the south. However, the joint family in Viet-Nam is somewhat different than what it is in some other parts of Asia. The bonds that join the members to the joint family together are ancestor worship and are more or less sentimental. There is no economic bond. Therefore emigration from the village to the town does not cause any particular disruption to the family. However, during the last few years mass emigration caused separation of husband and wife or other members of the family. Yet there was no particular economic difference.

/Dr. A. RAPORT

Dr A. RAPORT, Observer for CIUSS said that one of the main concerns of the Organization he represented is the social plight of those who have left their native village to go and live in a town. They have often been called "rootless". That is true both when they leave their village, thus severing a number of very close bonds, and when they arrive in the town, where they find it very often extremely difficult to adjust and find a new stable and normal situation. One might even say that the social position of the new urban inhabitant is worse than that of the villager that he used to be. This is true of the normal urbanization process, induced by the hope of better conditions of life and better salaries. But it is even more so when urban conglomeration is the result of accidental and temporary circumstances.

Referring to those countries in which he had spent the last three years, Dr. RAPORT observed that urbanization was caused to an important degree over the last ten years by the desire to save one's life and protect one's family, in spite of the loss of formerly stable means of subsistence and of the family property. Such an increase of urban areas is not a natural phenomenon: it does not correspond to new needs of the city and merely complicates its administration. When such is the case, one may wonder whether it would not be preferable, rather than attempt to settle this excess population in the towns, to prepare and encourage its return to the native soil which temporarily became inhospitable.

Continuing, Dr. Raport said that this may well be one of the cases where industrialization need not be considered as a necessary feature of urban development. For the excess population very often has no particular capacities for the industrial life, and no great desire to adopt it. Further, there is a grave risk that increased industrialization may not produce sufficient results to justify the indispensable public or private outlay to ensure its promotion. Moreover, the family unit projected in an urban setting by the peculiar circumstances of the last ten years finds assimilation

/ difficult and

difficult and continues to harbour centrifugal tendencies which it will tend to follow at the first good opportunity. But in the meanwhile, those incidental immigrants remain "second-class" citizens. This applies also to their children,-whose moral and social education may be seriously impaired.

In brief, added Dr. Raport, we believe that special attention should be given to the nature and causes of emigration from rural areas to the towns, for if in normal conditions absorption within the urban industrial system may be the natural solution, in emergencies such as those which occurred in several countries of the region a return to the native soil appears to be a better method of preserving the integrity and social value of the family unit.

Mrs. BACCBO (FAO REPRESENTATIVE) submitted the following statement:

Nutrition and Home Economics in relation to Urbanization

The urbanization of rural populationsobviously affects all aspects of life. In the present paper its influence on food consumption and nutrition will be briefly considered, with special reference to the urbanization which is now taking place rapidly in many under-developed countries. Some of the problems in the field of home economics associated with urbanization will also be discussed.

With respect to food consumption and nutrition, there are various important questions for study, which include the following: What changes for better or worse take place in the diets of rural people when they move to urban areas? What can be done to ensure that any increase in their purchasing power really results in their obtaining a more nutritious diet? What other special measures, such as supplementary feeding, can contribute to the improvement of nutrition?

Unfortunately very little relevant data on the dietary changes which follow urbanization are at present available. A significant rise in per caput income normally leads to an increase in food consumption and in particular a greater consumption of foods of high nutritive value such as animal products, fruits and vegetables. On the other hand, changes which are less desirable from the nutritional standpoint may also take place; people may discard traditional dietary habits in favour of more "sophisticated" diets which are defective in various respects. The increased consumption of foods such as highly milled cereals, sugar and fats, and of beverages such as tea and coffee and alcoholic drinks, which is usually characteristic of the process of urbanization, influence the composition of the diet as a whole. During the early period of industrialization in the West there was much malnutrition among urban populations because they consumed diets deficient in various essential nutrients.

/ Some comments

Some comments on food consumption trends in Japan may be of interest. Japan is the most highly urbanized and industrialized country in East Asia and may serve as a pointer to future developments in other areas which are still under-developed. In a period of only eight years, from 1930/31 to 1938/39, there were increases in the per caput consumption of milk, meat, sugar fats and tea ranging from 13 to nearly 40 per cent. More direct evidence of the effects of urbanization is also available from the national nutrition surveys conducted annually in Japan since 1946. Calorie intakes have been slightly lower in urban than in rural areas, possibly because of the more sedentary character of urban living, which is reflected in a somewhat smaller consumption of basic energy-yielding foods such as cereals and potatoes. The consumption of protein-rich foods and other foods of the more expensive kinds, however, is higher in urban than in rural areas. In the three-year period 1951-1953, the consumption of the following foods was found to be higher in towns than in the rural areas:

Milk and milk products	90% higher	Fruit	39% higher
Meat	157% "	Sugar	25% "
Eggs	65% "	Oils and fats	42% "
Fish	21% "		

Diet surveys in a few other countries also point to similar trends in food consumption. For instance, a comparision of the diets of different sections of the Indian population, based on surveys in the period 1935-48, shows that the percentage of total calorie intake derived from fish, meat, fruits, vegetables, sugar, oils and fats was appreciably higher in each case for industrial than for agricultural workers.

These and other available examples indicate that the present trend towards a greater degree of urbanization, associated with the efforts of

/ the governments

the governments to speed up industrialization as a means of raising national income, should lead eventually to an increased consumption of the more expensive "protective foods" as well as other foods such as sugar and fats and beverages such as coffee and tea. But, as pointed out above, urbanization, whether accompanied or not by higher incomes, does not always lead to nutritional improvement. On the contrary, there are several instances to show that, in the absence of necessary measures to safeguard nutrition, the diets of rural people can quickly deteriorate when they move to urban centres. This was shown, for example, by surveys carried out among the Bantu in the Union of South Africa. With urbanization the normal Bantu rural diet of whole grain cereals and milk is often replaced by one based on refined maize meal, white bread and mineral water. Efforts are being made to spread education in nutrition among the urban Bantu to counteract these tendencies.

Another example is the increasing incidence of beriberi, a serious deficiency disease, with the spread of rice mills producing highly milled and polished but vitamin-deficient white rice. Many rural people who normally consume more nutritious home pounded rice shift to milled white rice when they move to industrialized or urban areas. Thus the danger of increasing malnutrition, especially among the newly urbanized population, is very real. There are some indications that protein malnutrition is a more important problem among such groups than among rural populations.

Further surveys of different kinds are needed to provide more adequate information on the effect of urbanization on diet. It is important that these should be undertaken without delay, particularly in those parts of the world in which urbanization is now taking place rapidly. Trained nutrition workers are needed to plan and carry out investigations of this nature and to interpret their results.

/ Educational

Educational measures, and other nutritional measures such as supplementary feeding programmes for mothers and children, will help to ensure that the trend towards greater urbanization in many under-developed countries will not lead to a deterioration in nutrition but rather to improvement. A significant factor is that rural diets are based mostly on foods produced by the people themselves, whereas urban diets consist largely of purchased foods. Guidance to people on how to spend wisely the money available for buying food is therefore most valuable, especially in the initial stages of the transition from rural to urban living.

Urbanization is a social phenomenon of special interest to professional workers whose activities have a bearing on the adjustment of individuals and families to new conditions of living. This includes the home economist whose work is concerned with education in matters relating to home and family life.

Home economics has as its chief objective the improvement of conditions of family living and the promotion of the well-being and happiness of individual members of the family. The home economics teacher in an urban community, or the extension worker in a rural area, needs therefore to be aware of the many ways in which urbanization may influence and change the economic and social background which, in large measure, determines family welfare.

Urbanization, with industrial development, may be brought about by internal migration, i.e. the movement of people from one area to another within a given country. During the period of modern industrial development, the prevailing movement has been from agricultural to non-agricultural industries - from the farm and agricultural village to the industrial town or city.

The industrialization of rural communities is a more recent development and tends in general to be more characteristic of already highly industrialized countries with relatively high levels of living.

/ The rapid

The rapid growth of many modern urban communities has also been made possible by the movement of large numbers of individuals across national boundaries. One of the most interesting aspects of recent migration of this nature has been the trend away from "group" or "clan" migration which characterized the movements of people when society was organized on a kinship basis. To a large extent the newer type of individual and family migration has been made possible by the greater degree of uniformity of civilization (social organization), and the recognition by the community that the "foreign" individual can perform some useful service even though he does not "belong".

Since urban communities tend to attract individuals and families when they are relatively young and in their most productive years, the birth rate of such communities is usually high. As the economic and social status of the various emigrants becomes stabilized, the birth rate tends to decline. In general, there is an inverse relation between socio-economic status and the size of the family.

The home economist is concerned with the motives which prompt the individual to move into an urban area and the extend to which these motives are being satisfied. In general, the dominant motive is the desire to improve economic status by finding better opportunities for work. Comparatively few people who are reasonably well satisfied with their economic position move to new towns or cities or to new homes within a city. Those who do expect the urban area to provide them with a better standard of living and more economic security than they have known before. They tend to be restless and critical, as well as disappointed, if this does not happen. Many urban communities contain, therefore, a relatively high proportion of people who are struggling to adjust themselves to new situations and to achieve a different way of life. If the adjustments are many and difficult, individuals often show instability in conduct with subsequent unfortunate effects upon the family group.

Adequate and suitable housing is a problem of major importance in many urban communities. Families are frequently crowded into living accomodation

/which is

which is too small to allow for health and well-being. The home economist can help families to make the best possible use of available space and to construct or purchase simple pieces of equipment which will promote comfort and convenience.

Economic adjustments are frequently amongst the most immediate and urgent adjustments which individuals and families have to make. In urban communities the management of family resources presents special problems. One of the major needs is to educate families to spend money wisely and to appreciate the relative value of the array of consumer goods available. Information and guidance on the selection and purchase of these are needed.

Such education should be part of a broader approach to the "economic management" of the urban home. Since in urban communities several members of the family may be earning, more ready cash will be available than previously. The home economist can help families to understand the importance of managing their income, of planning relevent expenditures for housing, food, clothing, education, savings, etc., and of avoiding the economic insecurity often created by instalment buying and spending beyond their income. Such education is especially needed by families which are moving from rural communities where they were able to produce much of the food needed and to make for themselves articles of personal clothing and simple home equipment. It is often difficult for such families to accept the fact that they must now spend hard earned cash on such staple foods as rice, wheat, vegetables and fruits, milk, eggs, etc., which they formerly raised on their own land. In Uganda, for example, rural people rarely spend money on food - "Food just grows; money should be saved for other things which nature does not offer as gifts."1/

Buying and preparing food present special problems in the urban community. The mother of the home may not be familiar with the foods available

/in the city

1/ Roberts, Lydia, J. Report on Home Economics Education and Related Programs in the British Protectorate of Uganda. FAO. February 1956.

in the city market nor know how to use these to advantage. She may also not be accustomed to the equipment of an urban home and find it difficult to use. The home economist can assist by offering educational classes in diet and nutrition, and demonstrations of simple and sound methods of preparing family meals.

The high percentage of working mothers in industrial and other urban communities involving the absence of the mother from the home during much of the day, creates special problems for family members, especially for children. The home economist can help parents to understand these problems and to minimize their adverse effects through introducing better housekeeping practices and simplifying housekeeping tasks.

In order that the home economist can make an effective contribution, the effects of urbanization on family life must be fully studied and understood. This calls for carefully conducted studies of the social type which will indicate the most pressing problems which newly industrialized populations have to face and suggest how they can be solved. There is a great need for such studies in many parts of the world.

FAO is concerned both with the improvement of nutrition and with the development of satisfactory home economic programs in its member countries. With respect to the former, it assists governments to make dietary surveys, to develop supplementary feeding along sound lines, and to undertake programs of education in nutrition.

Assistance is given to countries in developing home economics teaching institutions, with curricula adapted to the needs of the country concerned, and in initiating demonstration home projects in selected areas. The FAO home economics program is interlinked with its work in agricultural extension and rural welfare and also with related activities of other United Nations organizations such as, for example, le Community Development Program of the United Nations.

/Winding up

Winding up the discussion, PROFESSOR HAUSER (General Rapporteur) said that in all countries family has been and is even today the basic social institution, but in the East it is much more so in many countries because it has been the big joint one. In modern days the industrialized and urbanized family tends to lose gradually many of its former functions. Though it has lost its function as an economic productive unit, it still remains a consumer unit. The experience of USA, with its small unit families, is that the rate of increase in the number of families is greater than the rate of population. This has implications for housing programmes. Other countries who are now in the process of increasing their number of small unit families can profit by the American experience in regard to housing. Though the family has lost its original recreational, educational, affectional and cultural functions, in reality these have been greatly modified. It still remains the basic unit, the cultural instrument by which the child is socialized, acquires character, and is moulded psychologically. Hence, in all planning, family must be given careful attention though from different angles now than before. The substitutes for the family today in certain respects are the policemen, the court, the remand homes, the children's aid society, the maternity welfare organizations, the family welfare agencies, and so forth. These must be properly planned in numbers and in quality. Urbanization involves the breakdown of the traditional morals, cultural background, etc. and the creation of new social institutions, social order, etc. and therefore results in a number of conflicts, inner and outer, for the individual. All these will have to be carefully attended to in planning.